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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2018
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [KIRF](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT'S INTERIOR MINISTRY ANNOUNCES NO APPEAL IN
BAHA'I ID CASE

REF: A. CAIRO 534
[1](#)B. CAIRO 157

Classified By: Minister-Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
William R. Stewart for Reason 1.4(B).

[1](#)1. (C) According to media reports, Egypt's Ministry of Interior (MoI) announced that the government will not appeal the January 24 Cairo Administrative Court ruling granting three members of Egypt's Baha'i minority the right to obtain government identification documents (ref B). According to the reports, the MoI allowed the 60 day appeal period to expire in late March without taking action because the ruling - which permits the issuance of government identification documents with a blank religion field to the three Baha'is who filed the lawsuit - provided the government with a "reasonable" option for resolving the issue. The MoI's announcement is consistent with what we had previously been told by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; that the government would not appeal (ref A).

[1](#)2. (SBU) Despite the expiration of the appeal period and the MoI's announcement, the three Baha'is have not yet received identification documents. According to a lawyer for the Baha'is, when they applied for the documents shortly after the court ruled, the MoI office responsible for identification documents told them that they were awaiting implementation instructions from the MoI. Recently, Abdel Magid El Anany, a lawyer associated with Islamist causes and apparently acting on his own accord, filed a legal challenge to the implementation of the January 24 judgment, a challenge that is permitted under Egyptian law. A lawyer for the Baha'is told us that he does not expect the challenge to succeed, but the court will not hear the challenge until June 6, and this may further delay the issuance of the identification documents.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: When we discuss this case with Egyptian officials, they tell us that, personally, they have no objection to issuing identification documents to Baha'is. They also tell us that, nonetheless, this is an unpopular stance in some circles of Egyptian society, and the government must therefore proceed carefully. Despite its caution, the government appears to be moving, albeit slowly, towards issuing identification documents in this case. An important unanswered question is whether the government will then extend the ruling to other Baha'is currently struggling without these all-important government identification documents.

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